RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

JUNE 1989

232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

UNDER THE CHAIR:

As we go to press, the municipal election is days away. As we all read the press accounts of the mayoral debates, receive the proverbial mailings, watch the new cable TV political programming, and perhaps meet some of the ward or mayoral candidates on the Avenue, I can't help but get depressed. Are any of the choices in either the mayoral, at-large, or ward races really going to change our quality of life? Campaign promises and accusations are flying fast and furiously, but what about the individual voter, the homeowner, the tenant, the child, or the senior? What will this election mean for them? We know that our next tax rate is being projected at upwards of $50.00 per $1,000. That means, if you own a two-family house valued at $150,000. your tax bill will be $7,500. From the insanity of last year's assessments and a tax rate of $30. per $1,000., this increase is unbelievable! If you are a homeowner, tenant, or senior, chances are you might not be able to pay these outrageous increases. In our neighborhood, the results are well documented. There are many houses that are empty - either for sale or boarded up and abandoned. Some owners add illegal units to their buildings to make up for these tax increases, creating substandard living conditions and taking advantage of lower-income families. Some owners try to compensate by breaking the R-2 zoning and attempt to build large buildings with as many as 40 condominiums.

Because of the illegal units and the zoning variances, the neighborhoods are too dense - too crowded, in terms of people, parking, and traffic. Rent increases and condo conversions displace families and tenants. There is a general sense of lawlessness, in terms of people doing whatever they want, regardless of the laws or just gneral courtesy to their neighbors: playing loud music, not cleaning their sidewalk or doing unauthorized construction. Children have no place to play but in the street, where they eventually get into trouble by vandalizing or trespassing on private property. Drugs and alcohol are all to frequently the only sources of relief in these overcrowded conditions. Anger and frustration create racial and neighborhood tensions. Crime, such as car thefts and house break-ins unfortunately follow. These factors destabilize a neighborhood and ultimately, as they spread through the different communities, an entire city.

Adding insult to injury, Jersey City has the worst city services, I have ever experienced. The streets are filthy, the infrastructure is not maintained, and the parks are a mess. We have a city bureaucracy that is too fat, a police department that is totally ineffective and a board of education that is a state joke. And we are paying top dollar for these "services." And the citizens are at a stage where they are resigned and

Coming Events

Saturday, June 10th, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. -
RNA FIFTH ANNUAL FLEA MARKET in RIVERVIEW PARK

Tuesday, June 13th:
REMEMBER TO VOTE IN JERSEY CITY'S MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Tuesday, June 13th, 7:30 p.m. -
RNA meeting at Harborview Healthcare Center.

RNA SUMMER MEETINGS:

TUESDAY, JULY 11TH, at 7:30 p.m.
TUESDAY. AUGUST 8TH, at 7:30 p.m.
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12TH, at 7:30 p.m.

UNDER THE CHAIR (continued from first page)

accept these conditions; either that or they join the pack and exploit the city for their own profit. "That's how it is in Jersey City" or "things will never change".

And then every four years we are given the choice to keep our present leaders or elect new ones to replace them. These "efficient, intelligent, selfless and sensitive" individuals who offer to serve the city to improve the quality of our lives and promote the general welfare.

Does this sound cynical and hopeless? In a way it is, BUT there is a chance for Jersey City. It lies in the strength and common sense of the individual voter. It is the decision of the majority of voters that gives the power of the government into the hands of these candidates as a sacred trust. PEOPLE, WAKE UP! Your children, your homes, your neighborhoods and yes, your very lives are being threatened. Please don't make a choice based on a handshake or a promise of a job or favor. Make your choice based a what a person has done in the past, on what values an individual lives by and whether that individual will listen to and respect the opinion of the people. That is what is important! Everything else is garbage and we have too much of that! Let's make an effort and throw out the past and the failures of Jersey City. VOTE FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR CITY!

MEETING MINUTES

While the voters of this City awaited the results of the mayoral election, RNA was conducting business as usual. The general meeting was held Tuesday, May 9th and was called to order by Co-chairman Hank Cesari.

The first and most important item of discussion was the upcoming flea market. On Saturday, June 10th , RNA will sponsor its 5th Annual Flea Market at Riverview Park. Members were given an update regarding table reservations, refreshments, volunteers, advertising, etc.

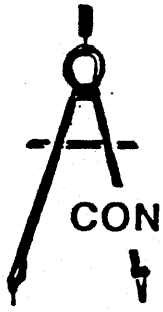
Next Mr. Cesari gave the group an update on certain area development projects that are of interest to our members re the proposed project for the property on the corner of Cuneo and Palisade Ave. Some other items discussed were the opening of the New York Ave extension (Ravine Road); the funds appropriated for renovation of Mountain Road; clean-up week-end in our neighborhood, June 3rd and 4th, the return of the Tumulty Park property.

Many thanks to Art Ammermuller the 50/50 winner at the special "Meet the Candidate's ,meeting April 24th. Mr. Ammermuller donated his winnings to the RNA.

We ended the meeting with the Treasurer's report and the 50/50 award and refreshments provided by members.

Please join us next month. The June general meeting will be Tuesday, June 13th, 7:30 p.m. at the Harborview Health Care Center.

Maria Tuzzo, Secretary



CONRAD'S CORNER

Some ten members of the Jersey City Preservation and Restoration Assn, and six volunteers from the Rahway Theatre cleaned up the lobby of the Loews' Theatre to stabilize the building for fund raising. It was a herculean task of removing two dumpsters full of trash. Bob Balfour lead the team from Rahway while Colin Egan of Union City made sure no artifacts would be lost. Anne Hart, Patty Giordano and her daughter of Jersey City did a thorough clean-up with dust pans and brooms.

The real hero of the day was Joseph Bobowicz of Hackensack who discovered a three foot deep pool of water above the lobby due to a clogged drain. Using trash bags as waders, he was able to open up the drain holding back some ten thousand gallons of water which if the roof had a leak could have done serious damage to the lobby. He also ran the generator for temporary lighting while George Snow taped up loose wiring from removed fixtures so that power can be turned on in the building.

When we got through it looked as if the lobby had just been restored with the ugly refreshment stand removed which the 20 thousand dollar study said would cost 50 thousand dollars to replace and which we most certainly do not need for a cultural center.

With one day's work we saved about 500 thousand dollars of the twenty million the study said it would cost to restore the theatre. In fact 500 thousand dollars worth of labor by preservationists could have even ruined the lobby.

With the State's 800 million dollar deficit and abandonment of the 200 million dollar Newark Cultural Center, the Loews' now stands a better chance of becoming a cultural center for Hudson County. Some of the funding for the Newark Cultural Center could be transferred to the Loews' since we only need 4 million dollars to rehabilitate the theatre.

Theodore Conrad

FLEA MARKET

LAST REMINDER: THE FIFTH ANNUAL RNA FLEA MARKET IS GOING TO TAKE PLACE THIS WEEKEND, SATURDAY. JUNE 10TH IN RIVERVIEW PARK BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 9:00 AM AND 5:00 PM. ALL OUR NEIGHBORS, MEMBERS AND FRIENDS ARE INVITED TO COME AND SPEND THE DAY WITH RNA IN THE PARK. THERE WILL BE BARGAINS GALORE, REFRESHMENTS AND JUST GENERAL FUN!

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SELLING AT A TABLE, CONTACT CARIN AT 420-1490. IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING TO HELP ORGANIZE, PLEASE CONTACT KATHY AT 963-0402.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO FIGHT DRUG ABUSE AND DRUG RELATED CRIME IN JERSEY CITY

(The following are excerpts from a plan that attempts to address the drug problem in Jersey City. It was put together by mayoral candidate Bobby Jackson. While RNA does not think this is as comprehensive a plan as it should be, it is the first draft in creating a program against this serious problem confronting not only our communities and city, but the country as well. RNA will make some comments after this article.

OVERVIEW:
TESTING: To set and establish confidence, elected officials and others playing leading roles on the fight against drugs should take voluntary drug tests.
DRUG TASK FORCE CHIEF: The appointment by the Mayor of one individual, who reports to the Mayor...This individual will be responsible for overseeing and coordinating the task force, consisting of representatives of various agencies, professional and community organizations involved in the overall effort.
Citywide Conference: ...call for a conference of all groups and agencies mentioned in this report as part of the anti-drug effort, to review this proposal, offer suggestions, and form work groups to begin to implement it.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JUDICIARY:
POLICE DEPARTMENT: It is not the purpose of this proposal to delineate a detailed procedure for enforcement by the Police Dept...However a few suggestions are in order:"Hot Line": An effective tool for encouraging citizens to reporty drug activity is a 24 hour special telephone line that perosns can call anonymously. To assure accountability all messages should be taped,and a daily check made by an assigned superior officer of the calls and responses.
COURTS/PRISONS: One of the major complaints of law enforcement officers has been that the courts release drug dealers as fast as the police arrest them....we also recognize that the jails are bursting at the seams. However efforts must be made to remove those who traffic in drugs for profit from our neighborhoods. Alternate forms of punishment or restraint can be used for less serious offenses, freeing jail room for drug dealers.
This is not a simple problem, and it cannot be resolved within the Jersey City community.We propose a conference on a state level, including legislators, local officals, administrators(county and state), prison officials, judges and others, to develop policy recommendations and strategies.

EDUCATION AND PREVENTION:
We have an entire generation of young people at risk, and must start now, with the very young through the teen years, to convince them that drug use is not a viable course for them. Every possible method must be used, to create a pervasive anti-drug atmosphere.
...call for a conference of educators, social workers and other appropriate professionals, as well as PTA members and other parents, public relations professionals, to plan an all out attack on drug use in our community.
...to the extent that we are able to improve education, housing, employment, and other basic problems affecting the quality of life in our community, we will be in a better position to rid the community of drug abuse.

TREATMENT/REHABILITATION:
There is a lack of adequate treatment and rehab facilities, both residential and outpatient. While most people agree more are needed, no one wants them in their neighborhood. There are agencies which are competent in the area, but they are underfunded...

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:
...the role of citizens is not one of enforcer or vigilante...there are important ways in which the civilian population can support and influence the effort...
ORGANIZATIONAL BASIS: All community based groups...should be invited and encourage to participate in this citywide network. It should be launched with a one day conference including city officials and professionals, and continued through a representative council, ongoing communications and feedback, with citywide meetings as considered desirable.
This plan calls for citizen participation in education and prevention (creation of a "drug-free block"), treatment and rehabilitation, and enforcement and judiciary action ("court-watchers").

RNA COMMENTS:

a) This is really a jumble of "Let's study the problem." There are no solutions offered.

b) It puts most of the burden on the citizens and little on Jersey City Government.

c) There is little attempt to deal with the demand side of the problem and none with the supply side.

d) AIDS is NOT mentioned at all or the relationship between this disease and drugs..

e) In terms of the problem with prison space: only put big dealers in jail and offer users and smaller dealers - drug treatment (long-term mandated) in lieu of jail. Jail does not rehabilitate people - it only teaches them how to be better criminals.

f) In addition to creating more residential and outpatient facilities, Jersey City needs to provide methodone clinics, individual counseling and family therapy.

g) The police are not doing their job. Drug dealers and users are living on our blocks and pushing drugs in our streets and parks. This is a well known fact. There are not enough police to provide effective patrols on the streets or protection of the citizenry.

h) Youngsters at risk are vulnerable from their friends and peers. Even more frightening, are the children who emulate their parents who use drugs and enable the kids .

WATCH OUT:
THERE'S A THREAT TO OUR ZONING

Parking is a major headache in the Jersey City Heights, as it is citywide. With little on-street parking, inconsiderate double-parkers and growing front lawns ripped out for car ports, the need for every auto's spot is plainly obvious. The residents of Webster Avenue and Hutton Street are now facing the possible loss of 17 garages to the wrecking ball. In its place are plans for a factory of 4,975 square feet, three stories high and indoor parking for only eight vehicles. Krist-Sue, Inc. claims it is being evicted from its present site at 126 Webster Avenue, across from the proposal of its new location. Krist-Sue is a garment manufacturer employing between 40 and 50 local, non-driving workers. This situation has prompted Krist-Sue to seek a variance for this Industrial One (I-1) structure in a residential Two (R-2). In this way, Krist-Sue maintains it will continue to economically support these people and "...help revive the neighborhood."

At least two times in the recent past have Block Associations lost fights in their bids to halt proposed buildings. Columbia Avenue, in the Heights, recently lost about six parking garages to a developer installing two undersized three-story homes. The Terrace Avenue Block Association had an 1,800 name petition seemingly "lost" on the city level: the petition was designed to stop the building of a fifth motel on Tonnelle Avenue (US1-9) and North Street in the Heights. So awful and disheartening these situations have been to the local residents, that the Webster Block Association stands on the shore of a new ocean.

The proposed Block 757 and lots 213 and 214 (Webster and Hutton St.) have been R-2 for at least 14 years. If Krist-Sue were to win the variance, a Pandora's Box would be open and no R-1 or R-2 would be safe ever again. Webster and Hutton Streets would be set back at least 50 years in regard to being a true R-2 neighborhood and the 40 to 50 some odd employees of Krist-Sue would remain in their present socio-economic situation. Krist-Sue proposes only eight indoor parking spots with no room for expansion (under the proposal). Krist-Sue sees no need to propose 40 parking spaces because its workers can't afford to support car expenses.

Richard Von Staden, President of the Webster Avenue Neighborhood Assn., recently wrote a letter starting that the Krist-Sue proposal would exceed I-1. He is right. In actuality the proposal is closer to Intensive Industrial (I-2) Zoning. The reason Krist-Sue does not press for an I-2 re-zoning is the language used in the Zoning Ordinance calling for an I-2 to "improve site planning for such features as off-street parking, off-street loading, and landscaping." Krist-Sue does not want to beautify Webster and Hutton Street; it only wishes to continue to exploit the Heights area.

Presently in the Heights, there are at least three I-1 properties where Krist-Sue could relocate without destroying the garages, neighborhood, and their workers ability to get to work. The first one has 8,000 square feet at 222 New York Ave., the second at 24 Floyd St. has 8,000 square feet. 114-116 Lincoln St. is tooled for clothing and sewing presently. Krist-Sue only proposes 4,975 square feet. We are sure these neighborhoods would not welcome Krist-Sue either, but we only introduce this to show there are always options.

Krist-Sue's attorneys, D'Alessando and Tutak, should realize the importance of compromise and the paramount need involved in this issue. The residents of Webster and Hutton Streets oppose this project, the residents wield the power. I urge the Board of Adjustment to reject the Krist-Sue proposal, in lieu of an empty I-1 footage in a pre-existing I-1 Zone. I also stand in support of the Webster Avenue Block Association and Cosmo Sasso in rejecting this factory. The First Amendment gives the citizens the inborn right to petition the government; it is time to pelt the Jersey City Government with petition after petition to end what is not in the best interest of the people and their neighborhoods.

Webster Ave. has such a petition to stop the Krist-Sue project. All neighborhood groups in the Heights and other sections should seek out Mr. Von Staden and Mr. Sasso in order to help increase Webster Avenue's strength. This in turn will help band the most powerful, most numerous lobby in Jersey City: its' people. Together we can make a difference.

Louis DeStefano

SAILING DOWN THE THAMES

Three students from Jersey City's Lincoln High School will get to sail down the Thames River and then participate in a tall-ships race from London to Hamburg in July as part of a project sponsored by WWOR Ch.9 and the Manhattan Yacht Club.

At an assembly last Wednesday, Lincoln students who are in good standing and 16 or older were invited to write 200-word or less essays about why they would make good ambassadors of good will.

The top 15 essayists selected by the school will be interviewed by representatives of the yacht club and the Secaucus -based station to bring the field down to 3 finalists. The three winners will fly to England on July 5 and will carry three nautical flags spelling our LHS, an American flag and two keys to Jersey City. One each will be presented to the mayors of the cities of London and Hamburg, which are celebrating 800th anniversaries. The three travelers will sail on Creighton's Naturally, an 80-foot racing sloop down the Thames and take part in the race that lasts from July 9 to 13th.

WWOR has been involved with Lincoln through its "A+for Kids" project, which began in the aftermath of a spring 1988 news series called "Flunk City."

(REPRINTED FROM THE NEW YORK POST)

DUES

RNA is in another calendar year and we ask that everyone pay their $3 dues. This money helps to defray the cost of mailing the newsletter. If you can't join us for our meetings, you may send your check, made out to RNA, to 232 Ogden Avenue, Jersey City, N.J., 07307.

WE NEED CLEAN AIR!

(The following is an excerpt from a draft of a Hudson County Air Quality Ordinance prepared by Carl Blumenthal, a board member of the N.J. Environmental Lobby and Susan O'Kane, an environmental advocate. If there are any comments or suggestions, please contact Carl at 547-4601.)

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING HUDSON REGIONAL HEALTH COMMISSION TO ISSUE AIR QUALITY PERMITS TO CERTAIN NON-INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPERS INORDER TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY BEFORE CONSTRUCTION

B1. THERFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Hudson Regional Health commission, pursuant to and elaborating on N.J.A.C. 7:27-18.1 et seq, Control and Prohibition of Air Pollution from New or Altered Sources Affecting Ambient Air Quality (Emission Offset Rules), shall require any developer of more than 50 residential units or 100,000 square feet of offices to obtain a permit for the amount of air pollution the developer must clean up; and

2. That depending on the amounts of each criteria air pollutant originating from the development (by heating, cooling, cooking, smoking, cleaning, etc.), and from the occupants when they drive their vehicles to and from the development within Hudson County, Hudson Regional Health Commission shall require the developer to offset or reduce those amounts of air pollution according to the minimum offset ratios established at N.J.A.C. 7:27-18.4, Table 2; and

B3. That until Hudson Regional Health Commission defines by regulation the actual emissions rates for these non-industrial sources, but not later than one year after the effective date of this act, the Commission shall base average emission rates on the guidelines of such professional engineering groups as the Institute of Transportation Engineers, Air Pollution Control Association, Association of Heating, Cooling, and Ventilation Engineers or those of the appropriate regulatory agencies, whichever guidelines are most protective of public health; and

4. That the Commission shall appoint an advisory board of three (3) environmental professionals, two (2) health professionals, two (2) developers and two (2) citizen advocates to help determine the emission rates and investigate any other matters the Commission deems appropriate; and

5. That the Commission shall establish permit application fees for developers in an amount to pay for the adminstration of this program; and...

7. That the Commission shall adopt the Emissions Banking Procedures in Section 20 of the Middlesex County Air Pollution Control Code (a mechanism for offsetting or balancing the estimated air polution from a new source with reductions in the same kind(s) of air pollution from an existing source);and

8. That in addition to all those methods of achieving from industrial sources offsets listed in N.J.A.C. 7:27-18.4 (a), the Commission shal determine what contributions to mass transit, district heating, energy conservation and other such methods of improving air quality will equal the required offset; and....

B13. That failure to obtain an offset permit before a building permit shall result in a fine of no less than $5,000. per day; and

14. That the Commission shal retain all fines ina fund to help developers with legitimate hardship cases meet the terms of this ordinance; and

15. That the County shall appropriate $100,000.for the start up of this project, and that the Commission shall repay the County the full amount as the Commission receives from developers the necessary fees to do so...

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RNA bids a sad goodbye to Doug and Betty Craft, who have moved to Jeffersonville, N.Y. They were some of the original members when we started up this association. They are painters by profession, who brought a little culture to our neighborhood. They will be missed, especially their gardening skills and tips.

Another family active in RNA, George and Theresa Graul, recently sold their house on Ogden Avenue and moved down to the Jersey shore. George, a retired Jersey City policeman, was always an outspoken and well respected member of our group.Long time residents, they were caring and concerned neighbors. Good luck and keep in touch!

RNA would like to welcome the new owners of the Graul house, Sal and Merle Lagano and their boxer, Rocky. They come from Bowers Street and are already active members of our group, participating in the Riverview Park campaign of 1988.

A sad goodbye to two good friends from 193 Ogden Avenue: Bob Murray, a former RNA treasurer, has moved on to Princeton, N.J. and Mario Aroyo is now in Queens, New York.

And the last announcement, but by no means the least, is the arrival of a baby girl named Catherine, to Cindy and Randy Sanford. They adopted this beautiful child several months ago and we understand mother and father and child are all doing splendidly. Welcome to our neighborhood, young Catherine.

HUDSON COUNTY NARCOTIC TASK FORCE NEEDS YOU!

YOU can make a difference in the war on drugs
YOU may have information that can help us
WE HAVE A HOT LINE:1-800-962-0056

WE HAVE A POST OFFICE BOX
P.O. BOX1877
Jersey City, New Jersey 07306

Your information will be kept CONFIDENTIAL It can be ANONYMOUS.

PAUL M. DE PASCALE
HUDSON COUNTY PROSECUTOR

GOING ON VACATION, OR SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER!

The RNA newsletter staff is going on vacation for the summer. We want to thank all the people who contributed to the effort and made our newsletter the success that it is. We are constantly receiving compliments from everyone and our mailing list now numbers over 400 addresses.RNA realizes the importance of the newsletter whose function it is to disseminate information throughout the community. We welcome all people and all opinions to be included in the newsletter. RNA will resume its publication in September.

RNA will still hold its monthly meetings every second Tuesday at the Harbor View Health Care Facility at 7:30 PM. Our committees, such as the Planning and Development, Environmental, and Parks, will still be active throughout the summer. If there are any questions or problems, please come to our meetings or contact us (Vito : 798-0493, Hank: 963-8176, or Maria: 659-2245).

BLOCKWATCHERS

Illustration : Risa Gerber

COMMUNITY AWARENESS COMMITTEE ON VACATION

HAVE A GOOD, SAFE AND HEALTHY SUMMER!

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ADVERTISING

We would like to solicit ads from local businesses in our area. It would be a good way for the merchants to advertise local sales and specials to the neighborhood and it would also help with the mailing of our RNA Newsletter. Anyone wishing to place an ad in the newsletter (circulation: approximately 500), please call 798-0493.

Happy Father's Day

FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
232 OGDEN AVENUE
JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY 07307

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RIVERVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

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